

**Dr. Peterson**

**Leadership Fitness Class**

4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2013, Global Learning Center, Room 129

**What is leadership?**

**Why is it important in today's global marketplace?**

**What defines good versus great leadership?**

**Defining Leadership:**

- “He who thinks he leads but has no followers is only taking a walk”  
— *Leadership Proverb*
- John Maxwell's model for level of leadership. It is a progression from the lowest level (#1, to the highest, #5)
  1. **Position** (People follow you because they have to. Basic entry level of leadership because you have a title)
  2. **Permission** (People follow you because they want to. You have a greater level of influence. People know that you care about them as a person, and you create win-win situations)
  3. **Production** (People follow you because of what you have done for the organization) People are working together to accomplish a goal. You become a change agent.
  4. **People Development** (People follow you because of what you have done for them) You mentor someone and they grow. You're a model for others, and expose them to growth opportunities.
  5. **Personhood** (People follow you because of who you are and what you represent) It will take a lifetime of proven leadership to attain this level. Followers are loyal and sacrificial. People follow you because they share the same vision, and because of your integrity.
    - Strong Personhood Examples: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
    - President Kennedy (talk about Rice University speech, how bold his vision was. (Do imitation)

- When President Kennedy laid out his vision for the U.S. to go to the moon in 9 years, we had not even orbited the earth successfully. It was a tremendously powerful vision he laid out.
  - **Level 5 differentiates good vs. great leadership**
- **Contrast Managers and Leaders:** Give people a vision and let them figure out how to make it happen.
- **Leaders articulate the vision, provide direction, and encourage experimentation.** They translate “my vision” into “our vision.” They are coaches, touch emotions, and are servant leaders.
  - I generally practice “no fault” management. How do we set up a policy to provide direction?
  - Good judgment comes from experience; a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
  - When I first became a manager, a department head at Texas A&M told me “Eighty percent of the problems you faced will be communication problems. The other 20 percent will be special communication problems.
- **Leaders take risks**
  - Examples from NSF trip to Antarctica (on the ice, your red “survival” bag, McMurdo Station, what you would have missed if you had not gone)
- **The importance of vision:** When we started Georgia Tech’s Strategic Plan, Designing the Future, we took great care to include the entire Georgia Tech community and the general community. We emphasized thinking big. We planned for 25 years because it required vision, and risk. In 2009 when we started the planning process, the economy tanked. It would be easy to be discouraged right now (budget, no merit raises). The Strategic Plan has allowed us to look forward.
- **Why it is important in today’s global marketplace:** Working to develop leaders and innovators at Georgia Tech. Why leadership characteristics are important in their careers. Interdisciplinary solutions; need for leaders vs. just

engineers or people trained in a particular discipline. Opportunities for leadership in the 400 student organizations, co-op, study abroad, internships.

- **Leaders are inclusive.**

- Dr. William Wulf, past president of the National Academy for Engineering drove home the importance of diversity in a lecture I had the privilege of hearing several years ago. One of the things he said was that aside from the social, moral and ethical rationale for having a diverse workforce or a diverse group in any organization, it just makes good sense. Basically, his point was that if you don't have a diverse group that you're working with then you have designs that are never thought of, ideas that are never imagined, and dreams never dreamed. It really does take a diverse group of people to come up with the best ideas and the best designs. We see that over and over. That in and of itself is an excellent justification for diversity, aside from the fact that it is just the right thing to do and it makes us better people. It makes our society a better society.

- **Leaders have confidence.**

- Art Hansen emphasized the need for confidence because while good information is important, the facts rarely provide unqualified guidance.

“One of the traits that characterizes good leaders is confidence and the ability to instill that confidence in others. Typically those who wish to accomplish anything of significance have just a little more confidence than the facts would justify. It is something that outstanding executives have in common with brilliant political leaders and great artists. It is true of societies as well as of individuals. Every great civilization has been characterized by confidence in itself.

Lacking the confidence, too many leaders add ingenious new twists to the modern art which I call “how to reach a decision without really deciding.” They require that the question be put through a series of clearances within the organization and let the clearance process settle it –

or take a public opinion poll and let the poll settle it – or devise elaborate statistical systems, hoping that out of them will come unassailable support for one course of action or another.

This is not to say that good leadership cannot profit enormously from good information. If the modern leader doesn't know the facts, they are in grave trouble, but rarely do the facts provide unqualified guidance. After the facts are in, the good leader must in some measure emulate the little girl, who when asked by her teacher what she was drawing told her she was going to draw a picture of God. The teacher said, 'But Mary, no one knows what God looks like' to which Mary responded, 'They will when I get through.'

- Your phone interview with NASA and how you were reading the book on heat transfer while on the phone.

**Personal example of the solution not being black and white:** Lightning threat at Football stadium.

**Leadership decision example:** Commencement in McCamish. Possibly engineering at UGA. Today, we are collaborating with all engineering programs in the state. We are still the largest, and one of the best in the nation.

**Biggest Challenges:** Story about 90% of what you deal with will be communication problems. The rest will be special communication problems.

**Close:** Story on why you came to Georgia Tech. The solutions to some of the world's biggest challenges will be developed at places like Georgia Tech. A privilege to serve, and to invest in the lives of people like you.